Brian Beisly **І** Methods Trial 1 **І** spring 2013

One of our discussions in our January session concerned the principles of andragogy. I tried something different in a training session that met each of the six principles, so I’ll describe the method and tools used and then discuss how the principles of andragogy were applied.

We discussed that adults often find it difficult to sit and listen. We don’t necessarily need a lot of breaks, but we do need, at least, movement. My employer provides a three week new hire training program. After Day One of *drowning* in 6 hours of human resources policies and procedures, on Day Two we provide training covering company overview, soft skills, and satellite signal flow technology. This is the first full day of classroom facilitation, which includes a lot of “sit and listen.” An activity provided an opportunity to try something different.

I wanted to give the learners a chance to get up, move around and still demonstrate learning. PowerPoint and collaborative discussion were used to explain the signal flow process of satellite broadcast technology, which I immediately followed with the activity. The activity focused on the seven component process of sending a television program from the network provider to the television inside a home. I assigned each person one component, but I did not assign them in the order of the signal flow process. Each person was instructed to consider their assigned component, describe the component, and draw a picture in their workbook. Then I used the large classroom whiteboard and separated it in seven numbered sections. The class was instructed to locate their assigned component’s place on the white board, identify it, and draw a picture of their assigned component. The tricky part I included was that learners could not speak to their peers. This required them to know the other required components in order to locate the appropriate location. It worked. The signal flow process was diagramed correctly, and each person described their assigned component to complete the “teach back.” And they got to stretch their legs in the process.

Principles of adult learning theory applied

1. It’s important that an employee understands each piece of the signal flow process because they can see how one piece removed affects every following c component. It makes sense to the employee, and now they can explain with confidence when speaking to an affected customer, which is a valuable trait for the employee.
2. I like to think an adult learning environment is a classroom filled with local experts because we all bring special knowledge to the table. Without this activity, we likely would not have realized that there is a talented artist in the class. He illustrated a finely detailed image of a satellite. We also discussed the importance that television has on people’s lives by involving their own favorite programs and how it feels when they cannot watch it because of technical difficulties.
3. The class appreciated taking ownership of the activity because they chose how to illustrate and describe their component. I did not tell them what to draw or what to discuss. I ensured they were clear about the assigned component but let them take it from there. Once released to lineup appropriately and see the successful result, I believe this was meaningful to them because they had a finished product.
4. This activity can easily be applied to real life. I proposed a very unlikely hypothetical situation where if a disgruntled employee at a program provider interfered with its portion of the signal flow. Who would be affected? They answered, “Everyone.” This helps to emphasize the importance of understanding the signal flow process even though they have no control over some components.
5. An interruption in the signal flow process is a real life situation that they will eventually encounter while talking to customers. One learner raised the concern about the satellite dish component and how he recent snow storms in the northeast will affect the signal flow process for many customers. This observation immediately demonstrated that learning was achieved.
6. This is likely considered the first “interesting” piece of the training that they had experienced. The motivation to learn was present because it made sense how a television program could be interrupted because of breakdowns in the process. Making the learning relevant to their job and allowing them to express themselves added to its effectiveness.

Tools used:

* PowerPoint
* Whiteboard
* Participant Workbook

Chronological order of satellite broadcast components activity

1. Program Provider
2. Broadcast Center
3. Satellite
4. Dish
5. Receiver
6. Access Card
7. TV and Remote Control